

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 5 1. A call waiting method for use in a telecommunications network in which a first caller is engaged in a current call with a second caller, and for processing an incoming call from a third caller to the first caller, the method comprising the steps of:
- providing identification of a plurality of callers in a predefined caller group;
- 10 detecting an incoming call from a third caller to a first caller, the first caller presently being engaged in a current call with a second caller;
- checking if the third caller is a member of the predefined caller group;
- if the third caller is a member of the predefined caller group:
- signaling the third caller to leave a message to be sent to the first
- 15 caller with a call waiting indication;
- recording a message from the third caller;
- providing to the first caller a call waiting indication along with the recorder message from the third caller; and
- if the third caller is not a member of the predefined caller group:
- 20 providing to the first caller only a call waiting indication.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the call waiting indication is at least one of a predetermined tone, an image, and a caller identification.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing identification of a plurality of callers in a predefined caller group comprises the steps of:

- selecting, by the first caller, callers to be added to the caller group;
- 5 communicating identification of the selected callers the telecommunication network; and
- storing the identifications of the selected callers in a storage in the telecommunication network.

10 4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the step of checking if the third caller is a member of the predefined caller group comprises the steps of:

- comparing an identity of the third caller to the stored identifications of the selected callers in the storage in the telecommunication network to determine if the third caller is a member of the caller group; and
- 15 providing a message signal indicative of a result of the comparison.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the identifications of the selected callers are stored at least in a subscriber database in the telecommunications network.

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6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recorded message is temporarily stored in a message database in the telecommunications network.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recorded message is replayable by the first caller.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recorded message is
5 saveable by the first caller.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises converting the recorded message to text for imaging on a display of a terminal of the first caller.
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10. A call waiting method for use in a telecommunications network in which a first caller is engaged in a current call with a second caller, and for processing an incoming call from a third caller to the first caller, the method comprising the steps of:
15 selecting, by the first caller, callers to be added to a caller group;
communicating identification of the selected callers to the telecommunication network;
storing the identifications of the selected callers in a subscriber database in the telecommunication network;
20 detecting an incoming call from a third caller to a first caller, the first caller presently being engaged in a current call with a second caller;
comparing an identity of the third caller to the stored identifications of the selected callers in the subscriber database in the telecommunication network to determine if the third caller is a member of the caller group;

providing a message signal indicative of a result of the comparison;
if the message signal indicates that the third caller is a member of the
predefined caller group:

5 signaling the third caller to leave a message to be sent to the first
 caller with a call waiting indication;
 recording a message from the third caller;
 providing to the first caller a call waiting indication along with the
 recorder message from the third caller; and

 if the signal indicates that the third caller is not a member of the predefined
10 caller group:
 providing to the first caller only a call waiting indication.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the call waiting indication
is at least one of a predetermined tone, an image, and a caller identification.

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12. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recorded message is
temporarily stored in a message database in the telecommunications network.

13. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recorded message is
20 replayable by the first caller.

14. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recorded message is
saveable by the first caller.

15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises converting the recorded message to text for imaging on a display of a terminal of the first caller.

- 5 16. A call waiting system for use in a telecommunications network in which a first caller is engaged in a current call with a second caller, and wherein an incoming call from a third caller is received for the first caller, the system comprises:
- a caller group having at least one caller selected by the first caller;
 - a subscriber database in the telecommunication network in which is stored
 - 10 identifications of the selected callers in the caller group;
 - a recognition module operatively connected to the subscriber database, wherein upon detecting an incoming call from a third caller to a first caller, the first caller presently being engaged in a current call with a second caller, the recognition module comparing an identity of the third caller to the stored identifications of the
 - 15 selected callers in the subscriber database in the telecommunication network to determine if the third caller is a member of the caller group, and the recognition module having an output for outputting a message signal indicative of a result of the comparison;
 - a message interface module operatively connected to the recognition module,
 - 20 the interface module having an input for receiving the signal, the interface module having an output for providing a signaling to the third caller that requests the third caller to leave a message when the message signal indicates that the third caller is a member of the predefined caller group;
 - a recording module operatively connected to the message interface module,

the recording module recording the message from the third caller; and

a message database operatively connected to the message interface module,
the recorded message being stored in the message database;

wherein the recorded message from the third caller is provided to the first
5 caller after a call waiting indication is provided to the first caller.

17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the call waiting indication
is at least one of a predetermined tone, an image, and a caller identification.

10 18. The system according to claim 16, wherein the recorded message is
temporarily stored in the message database in the telecommunications network.

19. The system according to claim 16, wherein the recorded message is
replayable by the first caller.

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20. The system according to claim 16, wherein the recorded message is
saveable by the first caller.